

SUBJECT Comments on Resolution of the Central Committee,  
CPSU, 30 June 1956

1. Our comments on reference document are based on a first reading of the text.
2. The Resolution is an uninspired effort to call off the great debate on Stalin, Stalinism and the Soviet system which was sparked by the publication of the secret Khrushchev speech.
3. It is notable that the Resolution omits references to --
  - a) the State Department release of the Khrushchev speech;
  - b) specific criticisms of the CPSU by foreign Communist Party leaders
4. The main theme of the Resolution is to the effect that the "enemy" is using the Stalin issue for an attack on the USSR and the Soviet/Communist system and therefore, that continuation of the debate would only aid the "enemy." The enemy is again particularized as the U.S., and it is alleged that the Poznan uprisings were financed by the U.S. government from Senate appropriated funds. We note that such argumentation is a typically Stalinist manoeuvre for quelling the discussion of an issue embarrassing to the Soviet Union.

Insofar as the Resolution is directed at the non-orbit Communist Parties, it is a clear call for the suspension of criticism of the CPSU and a sharp reminder to close ranks around the CPSU.
5. Indirectly acknowledging that the Stalin issue has thrown international Communism into confusion, and is shaking trust in the USSR, the Resolution attempts to stem the tide of criticism and questioning of the system and the current leadership which originated outside the USSR. The line of the Resolution represents an effort to impose a -- crude and contradictory -- Soviet position on the international movement without taking up specifically the more embarrassing issues raised abroad. In our opinion the Resolution again is Stalinist in its evasions and in its blunt assertions that the CPSU can do no wrong.

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6. As a further deterrent to the debate the Resolution bypasses Stalin's crimes and concentrates on a statement of the objective, historical conditions which facilitated Stalin's excesses. This statement, in contrast to Khrushchev's secret speech, amounts to a certain justification of the repressive aspects of the Stalin period as a matter of necessity in the face of the enemy's capitalist encirclement. Thus the main burden of the blame is shifted onto the external enemy, i.e., allied intervention in connection with World War I; Italian and Japanese Fascism as well as Nazism beginning in 1933; and post World War II unfolding of the cold war. It is our impression that the Resolution attempts to remove as much as possible from the great debate the Stalin system prior to World War II by emphasizing that this is an historically closed issue anyway. In support of our opinion we note that the role of Soviet security organs prior to Beriya's assumption of command (1938) is praised. The blame for "unjust condemnations of many honest Communists" is now laid by the Resolution to "enemy machinations" rather than to Stalin's use of police terror. Further, the Resolution states that Stalin's dictatorial rule was curtailed during World War II when CC members and Army Commanders acted independently. The full emergence of Stalin's tyranny is now placed by the Resolution in the post World War II period. In our opinion this represents a considerable departure from the attacks on Stalin's performance during World War II.

7. The Resolution also attempts to end the great debate by dealing with the question of co-responsibility of other CPSU leaders. It is interesting that the problem dealt with by the Resolution is no longer the general question of why no action against Stalin was taken, but is reduced to the question of why the leaders who had been able to act independently during World War II "did not take an open stand against Stalin and remove him from leadership." This is an obvious attempt again to curtail the debate by reducing the period during which co-responsibility could become an issue. The Resolution neatly sidesteps the issue by declaring that Stalin was so popular with the masses that "any action against him under those conditions would not have been understood by the people." Thus, it was "in no way a question of lack of personal courage." Note that the Resolution does not cite one single positive "act of courage."

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8. The Resolution, for the first time, refers vaguely to a "Leninist Kernel" of the Central Committee which set the new course after Stalin's death. Implicitly this may be a device to isolate a pro-Stalinist group in the Soviet leadership which can, if need be, be saddled with the onus of co-responsibility. The Resolution singles out three fields of State and Party activity in which leadership "countenanced by Stalin" was responsible for serious shortcomings. These fields were: agriculture, preparation for World War II, and foreign affairs. (However, only relations with Yugoslavia are specifically mentioned.) Although the "Leninist Kernel" is not specifically identified, it is fair to assume that Khrushchev identifies himself with it and is taking full credit for the anti-Stalin drive. We may speculate whether he implicitly threatens those leaders that were not in the "Kernel" with scapegoat treatment, and further, if this be so, whether non-Kernel leaders would take such a threat lying down.

9. The Resolution is particularly unconvincing when it comes to the defense of the Soviet system. The document clearly shows that the CPSU has been smarting under this attack, but it also demonstrates the CPSU's inability to provide an intelligent defense (as compared, e.g., with Togliatti's defense). The Resolution, instead, falls back onto a typically Stalinist dogmatic position that-- a) Stalin did not harm the Soviet system, and b) that the system is perfect and that Stalinism did not arise from the system. This, in the eyes of the CPSU, appears to suffice to close the issue. The only explanation we have for this highly unsatisfactory defense of the system is our assumption that the CPSU desires to stifle discussion. Furthermore, the Resolution states flatly that there is no need for basic changes in the system, and that their current measures to restore Soviet and Party "democracy" are all that is required.

10. The Resolution further indicates to the foreign CP's that no debate is desired by carefully selecting from various CP statements only those supporting CPSU position on the need for de-Stalinization but omitting criticism levelled at CPSU leadership. The CP's are blamed for incorrect interpretations. Togliatti was censured because, in our opinion, the criticized passage quoted by the Resolution implied criticism of the current leadership.

11. The CP's are forcefully reminded of their obligation to support the CPSU and to get on with their business, i.e., the exploitation of the opportunities afforded by the new look policy of the 20th Congress. They are advised that the Stalin issue is not the main issue today; that Socialism has broken out of capitalist encirclement; and that they should operate from strength, particularly in the underdeveloped areas.

However, the Stalinist formula shows its slip also in this respect. The directive for playing down the debate is linked with the allegation that "the adherents of the cold war are trying to increase the activity of the cold war." In the section dealing with non-Soviet CP's the document is notable for disabbing foreign CP's of the notion that their line and conduct need no longer be coordinated internationally, i.e., with the CPSU. The key statement designed to close the debate is "The forces of imperialist reaction are attempting to swing the workers from the correct path of the struggle for their interests, to poison their souls with the poison of mistrust in the successes of the cause of Socialism."

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